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This Grimly Serious World

The past two weeks have brought before the people the fact that we are living in a grimly serious world where crisis is the order of the day. Laos at the moment appears to be lost—without intervention by force. Cuba will be lost without the power of the United States applied to prevent it—preferably under agreement with a majority of the Latin American governments. Algeria is stabilized, but that almost surely is temporary. The Congo is hardly less of a chaotic mess than it has been, and a UN mandate appears to be the only way to give it opportunity to become an independent country through training men able to govern it.

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The President is, without illusions on these things and has shown that he is able to make necessary decisions quickly. And his speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors not only was well received but was strengthened by his full acceptance of the Administration responsibility in the Cuban fiasco. This in turn is strengthened by leading Republicans standing with the Administration in the face of this crisis.

There is responsible evidence that relations between the Free World and the Communist world are understood and the determination exists to make the Free World strong enough to force avoidance of all-out war. Documentation of the comparative strength of the "two worlds" is encouraging.

There has been an intensive two-day meeting, in Washington, between the press and the leading figures of the Administration. Background information essential to understanding has been provided; acceptance of responsibility has been gratifyingly improved through so full an experience as the Foreign Policy Briefing Conference, with members of the ASNE and other members of the press. This does not mean admiration and respect for all the speakers, for some were inept, some were acid beyond reason and at the same time confused the facts.

In Brief

It's kind of hard to believe that communism could make much headway with our children, considering the way they fight to defend private ownership of their toys.

An authority on retirement says you should have an income equal to two-thirds of what you now spend. "Gosh!" says Shotgun Schultz, "I don't make that much working full time."

On the whole it was an encouraging introduction to the current Administration leaders, from the President down. It has been no erroneous concept that an impressive array of intelligence is in the Administration.

The space race with Russia is far better in relation to our own position than is widely believed.

The arms race with Russia has for the present no truly dismaying aspects for America.

In both of these, most critical aspects of international affairs there is reason to believe that we are moving ahead with full awareness of what must be done. And this lies very strongly in the program for strengthening NATO.

These things do not mean placid acceptance of what you are told, but a far more comprehensive understanding of policy, both short and long range.

The misunderstanding, not to be easily resolved until General Maxwell Taylor's report on the investigation of the misfire in Cuba, shifts strongly as of now to the view that the CIA did a better intelligence job than immediate reaction indicated and the policy error was in the most important sense in not having an immediate plan for a follow-up when the invasion of Cuban rebels against Communist Castro failed. Immediate intervention should have been on the agenda, and the situation now would be extremely more favorable to a non-Communist Cuba. That a Communist apparatus controls Cuba is fully known, fully accepted, and the job is to smash it and restore Cuba to a truly independent government. There can, of course, be no publicized specification of how this is to be done. But the will to it, the determined intention, exists.

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The national independence in freedom for the Free World countries is at stake.

What might have been must be changed in the nation's thinking to what must be, with the nation united in its effort to face the necessities of such a situation and such a policy.

The American people must follow closely all that develops and summons themselves to acceptance of full citizen responsibility. We must move ahead in progress, in unity, in production, and with loyal willingness to make sacrifice when called upon. Our resources as a people, as a nation, with our allies, gives us the advantage if we are determined to face the needs of the time and determined to survive in freedom with honor.